Michael Jarrell

Composer

Born in 1958 in Geneva, Michael Jarrell studied composition with Eric Gaudibert at the Conservatoire de musique of Geneva and participated in various workshops in the USA, including at the Tanglewood Academy in 1979. He completed his studies at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg im Breisgau with Klaus Huber.

Winner of several composition prizes such as the Acanthes in 1983, the Beethovenpreis of the City of Bonn in 1986 and the Siemens-Förderungspreis in 1990, Michael Jarrell was in residence at the Cité international des Arts in Paris from 1986 till 1988 and took part in the IRCAM electronic music and audio processing course in 1986. From 1988 until 1990 he was in residence in Rome, successively at the Villa Médicis and at the Istituto Svizzero Italiano.

From October 1991 to June 1993, Michael Jarrell was Composer in Residence at the Orchestre National de Lyon, while the Lucerne Festival and Musica Nova in Helsinki dedicated their 1996 and 2000 editions to portraits of the composer. In 2001 he was commissioned by the Salzburg Festival to compose a work for piano and orchestra, Abschied. From 2010 to 2012, he was resident composer at the Besançon Festival international de Musique.

He has held the post of Professor of Composition at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna since 1993, and at the Haute Ecole de musique of Geneva since 2004.

Since his debut, Jarrell’s music has been inspired by his interest in painting, sculpture, dance and literature, and found an immediate place within the intellectual currents that punctuates occidental music of the 20th and 21st centuries. Alternating between intensely fragile and expressive passages, his writing gives also a large place to the soloist whilst paying detail to the colors and the textures of the orchestra.

Many leading soloists, sensitive to Michael Jarrell’s qualities, commission, premiere and interpret his works, which has developed into an important*corpus* of concerti. Among the most recent are *4 Eindrücke* (Renaud Capuçon, Tokyo Suntory Hall 2019), Aquateinte (François Leleux, Alte Oper in Francfurt, 2016), *Reflections* (Bertrand Chamayou, Philharmonie de Paris, 2016), *Des Nuages et des Brouillards* (Ilya Gringolts, Salle Métropole in Lausanne, 2016), *Émergences-Résurgences* (Tabea Zimmermann, Strasbourg Convention and Exhibition Centre 2016), as well as an ensemble version of the flute concerto called *…Un temps de Silence…*, premiered by Emmanuel Pahud and the Ensemble Sharoun at the Berlin Philharmonie.

In his stage works, such as *Cassandre*(1993-1994 after Christa Wolf), *Galilée* (2005, after Brecht), *Le Père*(2010, after Heiner Müller), *Siegfried Nocturne* (2013 – libretto by Olivier Py with baritone Bo Skovhus), *Bérénice* (2018, after Racine, with Barbara Hannigan, Bo Skovhus and the Orchestre de l’Opéra National de Paris with Philippe Jordan), Michael Jarrell explores the numerous interpretive possibilities of the text, from recitations accompanied by instrumental ensembles and electronics to lyric writing with large orchestration.

In 2001, Michael Jarrell was honoured as a Chevalier des Arts et Lettres, he received the Price of the City of Vienna in 2010 (Musikpreis der Stadt Wien), the Prix culturel de la Fondation Leenaards, and the Prix Suisse de la Musique in 2019. Residing in Geneva, he spent one year in residence from September 2015 as “fellow” of the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin.